The Story of the Man Who Wanted Revenge

Islamic Stories - Volume 61

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Chapter 1: The Wisdom of Saints and the Ethics of Response

A Seeker’s Complaint: Distress at the Hands of an Adversary

A man once came to Khwāja Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ, bringing with him a plea of distress and agitation. He spoke of another person who had made himself an opponent—constantly harassing him, conspiring against him, and causing him immense trouble. The man’s underlying request was for a form of endorsement: a non-objection certificate (NOC) from the revered saint, which would allow him to retaliate against this adversary.

He expressed his grievance in explicit terms, describing the verbal abuse and the physical inconvenience his opponent caused.

A Seeker’s Appeal for Retaliation:

Man:

“Ḥaẓrat! That man insults me. He scatters thorns in my path. If you grant me permission, I will teach him a lesson.”

The tone, though seemingly humble, betrayed the man’s desire for revenge. However, Khwāja Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ, renowned for his spiritual insight and wisdom, perceived the real intent behind the appeal.

The Saint’s Counsel: A Principle in Golden Ink

In response, Khwāja Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ offered words of profound wisdom—words deserving to be inscribed with golden ink. With calmness and clarity, he addressed the ethical and spiritual implications of retaliatory behaviour.

The Saint’s Admonition:

Khwāja Niẓām al-Dīn Awliyāʾ:

“O friend! If someone scatters thorns in your path, do not scatter thorns in his. Otherwise, the whole world will become filled with thorns.”

These words encapsulated a timeless ethical principle: that the cycle of vengeance, once started, transforms communities and societies into battlegrounds of bitterness.

A Reflection on the Saint’s Message: The Power of Goodness

The narrative concludes with a longing reflection—one that questions the condition of society and the self. If only we were to adopt this principle, the narrator laments, and respond to hostility not with enmity, but with goodness. In doing so, we would become the cause of ending evil by means of virtue.